

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph on page 8, lines 4 to 25, with the following paragraph:

Figure 2 is a flow chart of one preferred RFQ process showing the steps in the prior art. As the first step 202, a buyer 110 creates an RFQ 700 for one or more products or services with a set of attribute preference. The set of attribute preference ~~include~~ includes product attributes and other relevant factors including price, quantity, material quality, product quality ratings, merchant reputation, warranty, support, delivery time, and delivery cost. The attribute preference will be used later for evaluating sell bids by the buyer 110. In addition, the buyer is allowed to specify a criterion for the termination of the RFQ, typically in a form of time and date of termination. To help buyers specify all this information about an RFQ and also to automate the matching among RFQs and sell bids, the e-marketplace 130 may provide a structured form (in one or more Web pages) for all the data entries described above.

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 8, lines 26 to 29, and continuing on page 9, lines 1 to 7, with the following paragraph:

As the next step 205, one or more sellers 120 respond to the RFQ by submitting sell bids to the e-marketplace 130. The sellers 120 also specify various relevant factors in their bids including price, quantity, volume discount policy, material quality, product quality ratings, merchant reputation, warranty, support, delivery time, and delivery cost. Again, to help sellers to specify properties of their bids and also to ~~aut9mate~~ automate the matching among RFQs and submitted sell bids, the e-marketplace 130 may provide a structured form (in one or more Web pages) for data entries. As the next step 206, the e-marketplace 130 stores the

information about the submitted sell bids 142 in the submitted sell bid records 800 in the database system 132 of the e-marketplace 130.

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 9, lines 19 to 29, and continuing on page 10, lines 1 to 7, with the following paragraph:

As the next step 208, the first list of the submitted sell bids 800 is presented to the buyer 110. In most cases, the buyer 110 comes back to the e-marketplace 130 and finds the list of the submitted sell bids 800 posted in a specially determined place in the e-marketplace Web site 130. The buyer 110 examines the sell bids 800 in the list and evaluate them to select ones that meet the buyer's need best 209. Optionally, in step 210, the buyer 110 can request more information about one or more of the submitted sell bids 800 in the list. To help this information request process, the e-marketplace 130 may provide one or more hyperlinks for individual bids to Web pages that provide more information about the bid. The buyer 110 only needs to click on the hyperlinks to find more information about the bid. In addition, the buyer 110 may request more information which is not readily available in an electronic form such as Web pages. In this case, the e-marketplace 130 may provide contact information including phone number, facsimile number, and/or email address of sellers in the sell bid first list. Furthermore, once the buyer 110 is connected to a seller 120 through a method suggested by the e-marketplace 130, the buyer 110 and seller 120 can further negotiate about their bid in an effort to reach an agreement.

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, lines 8 to 14, with the following paragraph:

After finishing the evaluation of the submitted sell bids 800, the buyer 110 selects one or more sell bids from the given first list as winners 211. In some cases,

it is possible that the buyer 110 does not select any bid as a winner. The buyer 110 will be able to submit a new RFQ with a modified set of attribute preferences and modified market rules. However, this invention considers such a case a separate RFQ, and does not include the resubmission of a modified RFQ in the preferred business process 200.

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, lines 8 to 14, with the following paragraph:

Finally, in step 212, the buyer 110 purchases products or services from the selected sell bids. Typically, the sell bid ~~first~~ list given by the e-marketplace 130 provides a buy button for each bid in the list. To complete a transaction for a selected sell bid, the buyer 110 simply clicks on the buy button of the sell bid. It allows the buyer to provide necessary payment information for completing a transaction. In some cases, the buy button is connected with a shopping cart capability, so that the buyer 110 needs to provide the payment information only once for payment of two or more selected bids. If the buy button capability is not available in the e-marketplace 130, the buyer 110 may need to resolve the issues of payment and product shipping directly with the seller 120.

Please replace the paragraph on page 14, lines 1 to 5, with the following paragraph:

If the buyer does not find any interesting sell bids from ~~the~~ the catalog of tentative historical sell bids or the buyer wants to review more sell bids, then in step 410 the e-marketplace 130 will posts the RFQ 700 and invites more sell bids from sellers 120. If this happens, the following steps 411, 412, 413, and 414 remain the same as in the prior art shown in Figure 2.

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 16, lines 24 to 29, and continuing on page 26, lines 1 to 5, with the following paragraph:

Figure 6 is a flow chart of one preferred business process with sell bid aggregation. As in the previous business processes shown in Figure 2 and 4, the first step is an RFQ creation 602. Then in step 603, the buyer submits the RFQ to a sell bid aggregator system 550 instead of an e-marketplace 130. As the next step 604, the sell bid aggregator system 550 compares the RFQ 700 and its attribute preferences against the bid catalog of tentative/historical sell bids 900 and 1000 stored in the database 553 by using the multi-attribute match engine 552. As a result of this database query in step 605, the match engine 552 of the sell bid aggregator system 550 presents to the buyer 110 a list of ~~tentative/historical~~ tentative/historical sell bids 900 and 1000 that meet attribute preferences of the submitted RFQ 700.

Please replace the paragraph on page 17, lines 8 to 23, with the following paragraph:

The RFQ number 701 identifies this RFQ in this e-marketplace 130. The buyer identifier 702 identifies the buyer who makes this RFQ. Product attributes 706 give preferred values for various product properties. Also, the product attribute values are categorized as negotiable, non-negotiable, or informational according to the strictness of the value requirement. The closing time section 707 specifies two points in time: until when the e-marketplace 130 receives sell bids from sellers 120 for this RFQ, and when the buyer 110 makes a decision about winning bids and present the result in the e-marketplace 130[.,,]. The bidding rule section 708 specifies various rules applied to bidding. Examples include the minimum reserve price, maximum reserve price, and a rule for replacing a bid.

The clearing rule section 709 specifies various rules applied to clearing of considered sell bids. An example is a rule for breaking ties of two or more sell bids with the same attributes. The business rule section 710 specifies various rules regarding business practice of the buyer 110. An example is the scope of market participants, i.e., who is allowed to participate in this RFQ - private, public, or screened?